

What You Should Know About Sickle Cell Disease

Nine Steps to Living Well with Sickle Cell Disease In College

People with sickle cell disease (SCD) can live full lives and enjoy most of the activities that other people do. These activities can include going to college and living independently. Leaving home and attending college can be challenging for many reasons. For any person living on his or her own, life can be a lot easier if he or she is prepared so that making good decisions is easier. The following tips will help anyone with SCD live well while at school.

1. Find good medical care.



2. Practice healthy habits.



3. Prevent infections.



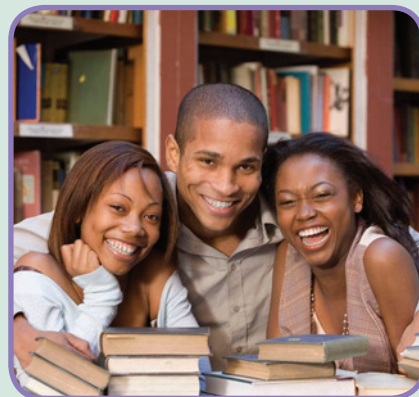
4. Physical activity.



5. Stress management.



6. On campus support network.



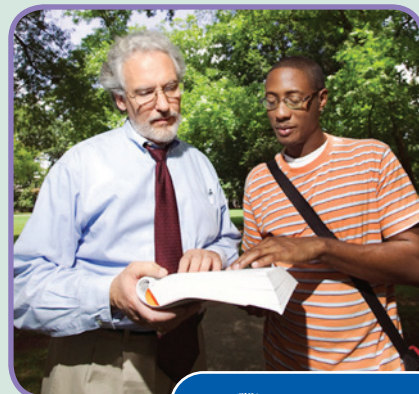
7. Off campus support group.



8. Maintain health records.



9. Connect with a student advisor or counselor.



Find good medical care. SCD is a complex disease. Good quality health care from doctors and nurses who know a lot about the disease can help to prevent some serious problems. Often the best choice is a hematologist. Prior to arriving on campus, people with SCD should identify a hematologist in their school community.

Practice healthy habits. People with SCD should drink 8 to 10 glasses of water every day and make healthy choices for meals. Also, they should try not to get too hot, too cold, or too tired.

Prevent infections. Common illnesses, like the flu, quickly can become dangerous for people with SCD. The best defense for them is to take simple steps to help prevent infections while sharing campus facilities such as dormitories, bathrooms, and gyms. People with SCD should talk with their doctor about receiving the flu and pneumococcal vaccines.

Physical activity. People with SCD can and should engage in exercise to stay healthy. However, activities should not be excessive and plenty of rest and water should be included in any exercise routine.

Stress management. Being at college can be stressful for any student. Stress can lead to or worsen pain crises or increase pain episodes among people with SCD. Anyone with SCD should learn the signs of stress and take appropriate actions to manage high stress levels, such as regularly exercising and relaxing.

On campus support network. For people with SCD, it is important that a friend, academic advisor, or health provider (or any combination thereof) on campus be aware of their condition. In the event of an emergency, people with SCD should have someone who is able to contact their family or a physician if they are unable to do so themselves.

Off campus support group. People with SCD should find a patient support group or community-based organization in their school community that can provide information, assistance and support.

Maintain health records. People with SCD should contact student health services prior to their arrival on campus and provide them with up-to-date medical records and a list of medications that they are using. Providing this information in advance is crucial in the event of an emergency.

Connect with a student advisor or counselor. People with SCD should provide their academic advisor or counselor with information about their condition. A hospital visit might cause the person with SCD to be absent from class for an extended period of time. An advisor can serve as an advocate for the person with SCD with professors or other school-related personnel.

For more information visit www.cdc.gov/healthyliving
www.cdc.gov/sicklecell

